


Slide 1

# **“The Basics”**

**For Effective  
School  
Improvement  
Council  
Leadership**



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Slide 2

## **What Is A School Improvement Council?**

A legislatively-mandated community advisory group that works with the principal to cultivate a school environment that supports optimum student achievement.



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Slide 3

## **What Is A School Improvement Council?**

Unlike School Boards, SICs do not:

- ★ Hire, fire or evaluate staff
- ★ Mandate curriculum changes
- ★ Raise or possess funds

SICs *do* provide input, feedback, recommendations, resources, and support to the principal and school



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### SIC History in South Carolina

**1977 Education Finance Act (EFA)**

- ▶ Created School Advisory Councils to give parents and community a direct voice in public education

**1984 Education Improvement Act (EIA)**

- ▶ Changed name to School Improvement Councils
- ▶ Directed SICs to take an active role in the development of a three-year improvement plan for the school
- ▶ Required SICs to monitor the progress of the plan's goals and to report on the status of the plan
- ▶ Added incentive funds to reward school progress

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### SIC History in South Carolina

**1993 Act 135**

- ▶ AKA "Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act"
- ▶ SIC involvement in developing a five-year school improvement plan
- ▶ Added new responsibilities for reporting progress

**1998 Education Accountability Act (EAA)**

- ▶ Continued SIC roles in the improvement process
- ▶ Mandated SIC roles in accountability
- ▶ Revisions made in 2008 continued SIC roles and responsibilities

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### What Do SICs Do?

- ★ Help develop Five-Year Strategic Plan (also called School Renewal Plan or Improvement Plan) to bolster continued student achievement
- ★ Assist in tracking progress made as practices are put into operation (usually through committees)
- ★ Write annual Report to the Parents about progress in achieving goals



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### What Do SICs Do?

- ★ Assist principals in writing the 425-word narrative for the S.C. School Report Card issued each fall
- ★ Provide input to school administrators on how incentive funds (Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards) will be spent
- ★ For schools rated as “At Risk,” SICs assist in annual revision of the schools’ Five-Year Plan



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### SIC Membership

*Composition is mandated by state law*

**Five membership categories:**

- ▶ Parents - elected
- ▶ Teachers - elected
- ▶ Students (Grades 9-12) - elected
- ▶ Community members - appointed
- ▶ Ex-Officio:
  - Principal (required)
  - Others nominated by virtue of knowledge and/or experience, including:  
*Assistant Principal, Business Partner, PTO Representative, Past SIC Chair, Teacher of the Year, Title I Parent Advisory Representative*



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### Elected Members

**Make up two-thirds of the membership of an SIC (excluding Ex-Officio)**

**Minimum number of elected:**

- ▶ 2 parents
- ▶ 2 teachers
- ▶ 2 students (Grades 9-12)

Should be effective yet manageable in size

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## Appointed Members

Make up one-third of the membership of an SIC (excluding Ex-Officio)

Principal makes appointments based on reflection of the school and community:

- Non-parent taxpayers
- Race, Gender
- Income status
- Educational background

Tap community resources:

- Faith community
- Law enforcement
- Service and health agencies

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## Balance Membership

**REMINDER:**

- \* By law SICs must have twice as many elected members as appointed members AND
- \* One-half as many appointed members as elected members
- \* If you increase the number in one category, be sure to increase the number in the other
- \* Balance of elected and appointed should reflect school's demographics

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## Ex-Officio Members

*"By Virtue of Office"*

SICs determine what other positions fall in this category – and if they vote

- Assistant Principal
- Business Partner
- PTO Representative
- Past SIC Chair
- Teacher of the Year
- Title 1 Parent Advisory Representative

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### Terms of Elected Members

- ▶ Elected members serve staggered two-year terms
- ▶ Half of an SIC's elected members should rotate off each year
- ▶ Elections must be held EVERY year

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### Terms of Appointed Members

- ▶ Community members appointed by principal serve according to local SIC bylaws
- ▶ Term of service is governed by local SIC bylaws (either one or two years)

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### The Election Process

- \* Statutory deadline for elections is October 15th
- \* Elections can be held in the Fall or Spring
- \* Parents – election at open house, PTA meetings, by ballot, etc. Be sure to advertise!
- \* Teachers – election during faculty meetings
- \* Students – special office as part of elections process. **Do not appoint!**



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### Putting the Plan Into Action

- \*SIC helps develop Five-Year Strategic Plan
- \*Choose 3 to 5 SIC goals for the year
- \*Develop a committee structure to monitor goals
- \*Committees make regular reports to the full SIC
- \*Adjust goals as necessary



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### Report to the Parents

- \*SIC writes a Report to the Parents about the school's progress
- \*Out by April 30th each year
- \*Sell your school!
  - Goals achieved
  - Honors and recognitions
  - Mission statement
  - List SIC members
- \*Make extra copies
- \*Don't repeat your state Report Card information



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### Report Card Narrative

With the principal, the SIC writes the 425-word narrative for the annual S.C. School Report Card:

- \*Briefly describe your school
- \*Note successes and challenges to be met
- \*Submitted to SDE annually in early Summer
- \*Schools rated as "At Risk" also send the information to the SC-SIC
- \*Signed by the principal and the SIC Chair



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### Incentive Awards

Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards given each year to schools with significant improvement on state Report Cards

- ★ Award flags and cash for honored schools
- ★ SICs provide guidance to schools on how cash awards to be spent
- ★ SIC Chair must sign off on the awards expenditure



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### Effective Councils

- ★ Each member has a job!
- ★ Balanced membership (reported by school to SC-SIC Member Network by November 15th)
- ★ Current Bylaws – samples can be found on the SC-SIC website: <http://sic.sc.gov>
- ★ Regularly scheduled meetings
- ★ Published agendas
- ★ Member training
- ★ Support of the district



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### SIC Self-Assessment Profile

Evaluate how your SIC functions

- ★ Provided in “The Basics” Handbook
- ★ Get new ideas!
- ★ Increase effectiveness!



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### **"At Risk" Schools**

**For schools rated as "At Risk" on the S.C. School Report Card:**

- \* Schools must revise Five-Year Plan annually
- \* SICs mandated to be involved in the revision
- \* Revisions take place in the Spring and focus on improving test scores
- \* Guidance provided to SICs from school, district and state levels



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### **SIC Benchmarks**

**Schools rated as "At Risk" must submit documentation to the SC-SIC by June 15th**

- \* Technical Assistance
- \* Training
- \* Bylaws
- \* Membership ratio in compliance
- \* Minutes
- \* Report to Parents by April 30th
- \* S.C. School Report Card Narrative



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### **Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award**

**Awarded annually by SC-SIC in recognition of outstanding and effective efforts by a local SIC**

- \* Single winner, four Honorable Mentions
- \* Other high-scoring SICs can receive Honor Roll status
- \* SICs submit applications and letters of support



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### SC-SIC Services Include

- SC-SIC website <http://sic.sc.gov> with free downloadable materials, information and links
- Quarterly newsletter mailed to parents and community members – also available online
- Variety of training opportunities across the state
- “Council Updates” – current topics of educational interest
- Telephone and email support
- Other state, regional and national resources



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Slide 26

### SC-SIC Mission:

*“To promote and support civic engagement for quality public education in South Carolina.”*



*“Civic Engagement in Public Education”*

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### Contact Information

South Carolina School Improvement Council  
USC College of Education  
Columbia, SC 29208  
803-777-7658 or 800-868-2232  
[sic@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sic@mailbox.sc.edu)  
Visit us on the web at  
<http://sic.sc.gov>



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